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# Introduction

Eastern Region  
**SR 291 Route Development Plan**  
*Freya Street to Scotts Valley Road*

## WSDOT Planning

Planning at the WSDOT is a continual, evolving, and flexible process that seeks to facilitate the development and implementation of sound and innovative strategies, incorporating the dynamic issues and needs that face our transportation system. The goal of WSDOT planning is to create an integrated transportation system capable of supporting a vital economy while maintaining sensitivity to the surrounding environment and promoting a positive quality of life. We endeavor to accomplish this goal by integrating the needs of WSDOT with those of stakeholders including cities, counties, the public, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs). During implementation of the recommendations, WSDOT will strive to employ context sensitive design.

## Eastern Region RDP Process

Route Development Plans identify proposed improvements on a designated section of a state highway that will accommodate safety and capacity requirements for the next 20 years. The RDP process integrates various elements to produce an endorsed highway design solution. Some of these elements are noted below in a brief description of the four-phased process utilized by the WSDOT Eastern Region to develop a RDP for a state highway within its jurisdiction:

### **Phase 1**

*Initiate stakeholder and public involvement.*

*Data Collection: inventory existing conditions, identify route deficiencies & future needs, identify existing and projected Level of Service (LOS), and examine route continuity.*

### **Phase 2**

*Form a Stakeholder Advisory Committee and an internal WSDOT Eastern Region Steering Committee to focus efforts for creation of a route development plan. The internal WSDOT committee includes representation from Planning, Program Management, Environmental, Construction, Maintenance, Traffic, Local Programs, and Project Development.*

**Phase 3**

*Identify and develop conceptual design alternatives.*

*Evaluate advantages and disadvantages of each alternative.*

*Present findings to stakeholders and public.*

**Phase 4**

*Revise conceptual design alternatives, if needed.*

*Complete the RDP. Present final conceptual design alternatives to stakeholders. Obtain inclusion of general conceptual design alternatives in the Washington State Highway System Plan, and in the comprehensive plans of local jurisdictions, as appropriate.*

This Route Development Plan is part of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Eastern Region long-range planning program and is also intended to support local jurisdictions in implementation of the Growth Management Act (GMA) RCW 36.70A. The RDP also supports the mission of the Washington State Department of Transportation:

**Mission Statement**

***The Washington State Department of Transportation keeps people and business moving by operating and improving the state transportation systems vital to our taxpayers and communities.***

This long-range plan will provide:

- Guidance for regional decision makers regarding future projects on this state route;
- Direction for determining possible mitigation measures for proposed developments;
- Inclusion of improvement solutions in the WSDOT Highway System Plan;
- Guidance for interim projects to ensure the progression towards the long-range objectives;
- Coordination with stakeholders on the future development of this state route; and
- Adoption into regional comprehensive plans.

## Stakeholder and Public Involvement

Public involvement is an integral part of the RDP process. As part of WSDOT's plan to emphasize early, continuous, and meaningful involvement, this RDP initiated an aggressive public involvement campaign to promote early and ongoing stakeholder and public input with the open exchange of information, and promoting a greater understanding of the competing needs and concerns of WSDOT, stakeholders and the public. An Advisory Group was established for the SR 291 RDP. This Advisory Group was comprised of representatives from Spokane and Stevens Counties, City of Spokane as well as several neighborhood associations, resulting in over 40 representatives. In addition, WSDOT sent out over 21,000 mailers to citizens along the route, hosted four listening posts along the route, and held open houses to present conceptual alternatives and receive feedback. A web page is also available at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr291rdp> that provides further detail about the SR 291 RDP. Ultimately, this public involvement effort leads to RDP alternative solutions strongly supported by WSDOT, stakeholders and the public.

### Chronology of Events

The following list is a chronology of stakeholder and public involvement. This list is an overview. It does not include contacts with individual landowners and developers. Those contacts are documented in WSDOT's SR 291, Freya Street to Scotts Valley Road RDP file.

06/10/04 – Eastern Region RDP Steering Committee (ERSC) Kickoff Meeting.

06/24/04 – Letters to interested parties for RDP Advisory Group participation.

07/08/04 – Kickoff RDP Advisory Group Meeting.

08/02/04 – Political Leadership Notifications went out to 30 nearby affected Mayors, City Council Members, County Commissioners, Washington State Representatives, Washington State Senators, US Senators (Washington State), and US Representative (Washington State).

08/03/04 – 21,374 Public information & survey mailers sent.

08/19/04 – Listening Post at Nine Mile Feed & Supplies.

08/24/04 – Listening Post at Safeway (Francis Ave.).

08/26/04 – Listening Post at Suncrest Outpost (Stevens County).

08/27/04 – Listening Post at Fred Meyer (Francis Ave. – East of Division St.).

09/15/04 – SR 291 Route Development Plan presentation to the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Transportation (CACT).

09/29/04 – SR 291 Route Development Plan presentation to the 291 Traffic Safety Corridor Project Steering Committee.

10/27/04 – SR 291 Route Development Plan presentation to the Rocket Velo Racing club (Bicycling). WSDOT conducted a bicycling survey for SR 291.

11/03/04 – First presentation to Eastern Region RDP Steering Committee (ERSC).

11/08/04 – SR 291 Route Development Plan presentation to the Spokane Bicycle Club. WSDOT conducted a bicycling survey for SR 291.

11/18/04 – RDP Advisory Group Meeting #2 to develop preliminary solutions to the concerns identified through the Listening Posts and by the Advisory Group.

11/18/04 – SR 291 Route Development Plan & Public Feedback presentation to the Northwest Neighborhood Council.

01/11/05 – RDP Advisory Group Meeting #3 to develop preliminary solutions for Section #3. This was an evening meeting at the Tum Tum Community Center (Suncrest Area).

01/11/05 – SR 291 Route Development Plan & Public Feedback presentation to the Stevens County Citizen Action Team meeting (SCCAT).

01/24/05 – E-mail update to the Eastern Region RDP Steering Committee (ERSC) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Advisory Group meetings and the presentation to the Stevens County Citizen Action Team (SCCAT).

03/09/05 – Meeting with Margaret Watson, and Eileen Hyatt, both with Spokane Bicycle Club, Inland Northwest Trails, and WA Bicycle Alliance, to discuss bicycling issues being addressed in the Route Development Plan. Rebecca Smith – WSDOT was also present at the meeting.

06/20/05 – Field review Coordination Meeting with City of Spokane representatives Valla Melvin and Bob Turner. Discussed proposed solutions and potential solutions, data sharing, and implementation steps.

07/06/05 – Second presentation to Eastern Region RDP Steering Committee (ERSC). Update of RDP activities, presentation of improvement ideas to the Committee for feedback and prioritization of analysis efforts. Identified major issues/concerns that may have been missed and the feasibility of each improvement idea. Outlined the remaining scheduled public involvement events for the Group's thoughts, and discussed the overall project schedule.

08/31/05 – ERSC Meeting on the SR 291 Route Development Plan. The RDP Team presented for discussion the improvement alternatives analysis, design layouts, and the associated cost estimates. The meeting helped identify the feasibility of each improvement idea, and identified major improvement ideas to move forward towards recommendation in the Plan.

11/08/05 – November Coordination Meeting with the City of Spokane

11/22/05 – SR 291 RDP Steering Committee meeting was held to discuss the Master Projects List and high priority projects. Consensus was reached on the final recommendations.

12/08/05 – Coordination meeting with the Stevens County Planning office.

12/15/05 – 4<sup>th</sup> RDP Advisory Group Meeting where we presented and discussed the final recommendations in the Plan, funding/future coordination with the City, and the public involvement activities that were remaining.

02/14/06 – SR 291 RDP Steering Committee meeting was held to discuss Spokane County's Northwest Urban Connector (NWUC) proposal and how it will be discussed in RDP document. The remaining public involvement was also discussed and agreed upon by the Committee.

3/07/06 – 5<sup>th</sup> RDP Advisory Group Meeting was held to discuss Spokane County's Northwest Urban Connector (NWUC) proposal and how it will be discussed in RDP document. The NWUC and remaining public involvement activities was discussed and consensus was reached by the Group.

4/11/06 thru 4/18/06 – RDP Open Houses (total of 3) for public comments on proposed short-range, mid-range, and long-range improvements to be included in the RDP document.

August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006 – Final RDP submitted to Advisory Committee and local agencies.

## **Open Houses**

Open houses were held in April 2006, in east Spokane, west Spokane, and Suncrest. Local citizens identified problems, issues, and concerns along this segment of SR 291 at the initial four listening posts and/or through the website. One of the most common suggestions voiced at the open houses was to have alternate routes or travel options. Some other concerns brought to our attention were: 1) people driving faster since there will be more lanes, 2) signals needed along Francis Ave., and 3) difficulty making left turns off and on to minor roads.

## SR 291 Trend Analysis

The counties that this corridor serves have experienced significant growth in recent years. The population data for the counties is detailed below along with the growth experienced by Washington State as a whole:

### POPULATION

	Census 1990	Census 2000	Percent Increase	Forecasted Increase (2025)	Population 2003	Population Estimate 2025
Spokane County	361,364	417,939	15.7%	30.3%	431,027	561,627
Stevens County	30,948	40,066	29.5%	57.1%	40,776	64,057
Washington State Overall	4,866,669	5,894,121	21.1%	30.1%	6,131,445	7,975,471

*Source: Office of Financial Management (OFM)(February 2002) and U.S. Census Bureau data; As this Route Development Plan was being finalized, the Spokane County Board of County Commissioners were deliberating the adoption of new OFM population growth forecasts for Spokane County, as required by the Growth Management Act. Population forecasts were adopted by the Commissioners in May, 2006.*

## Analysis Methods

Travel demand modeling for the various scenarios was accomplished using VISUM software. The 2004 base year model was obtained by applying a 2% growth factor to the Spokane Regional Transportation Council's (SRTC) 2003 model with additional model edits. The SRTC 2025 base model, including the same model edits as the 2004 model, was used for the future volumes. Model edits were needed to better reflect actual ground counts and were approved by the SRTC via e-mail on 8/16/05. 2025 forecasts were consistent with the Spokane County and Stevens County Comprehensive plans and the current SRTC Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and included as background assumptions the full build-out of the North Spokane Corridor and the Bigelow Gulch Urban Connector projects.

Unsignalized intersection Level of Service (LOS) was determined using Highway Capacity Software (HCS). Signalized intersection LOS was determined using SYNCHRO 6.